

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3372

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 5227

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SW, XF

SUBJECT: SWEDISH MIDEAST POLICY

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 5164; (B) STOCKHOLM 5109; (C) ALGIERS 2537

1. THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF THE RIKSDAG, COMPOSED OF THE PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER, AND HEADS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES (EXCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS) HELD A SPECIAL SESSION THE NIGHT OF NOV. 20 TO CONSIDER SWEDEN'S POLICY TOWARDS THE MIDEAST. THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WAS CALLED AT THE REQUEST OF LIBERAL PARTY LEADER GUNNAR HELEN, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE SPEECH BY SWEDISH UN PERMREP RYDBECK AT THE UNGA TONIGHT (NOV. 21) IN THE MIDEAST DEBATE. HELEN, LINKE MANY OTHERS IN THE SWEDISH POLITICAL SPECTRUM, WAS APPARENTLY CONCERNED THAT THE PALME-ARAFAT MEETING

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LAST WEEK IN ALGIERS SIGNIFIED A "TILT" IN SWEDISH POLICY

TOWARDS THE ARAB WORLD (REF A). THE COUNCIL MEETING OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HELEN AS WELL AS THE OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS TO GET AN INPUT INTO THE SWEDISH UN ADDRESS.

2. COUNCIL MEETING PROCEEDINGS ARE SECRET AND NO COMM UNIQUE

WAS ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING. HOWEVER, HELEN TOLD THE PRESS AFTERWARDS THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT "STANDS FIRM IN ITS TRADITIONAL" MIDEAST POLICY, ALTHOUGH "THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE WITH THE RECOGNITION THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE NOT JUST A REFUGEE PROBLEM BUT A PROBLEM OF A FUTURE NATIONAL UNITY." ACCORDING TO HELEN, AMBASSADOR RYDBECK WILL SUPPORT BOTH THE ISRAELIS RIGHT TO EXIST WITHIN SECURE BORDERS AND THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. HOWEVER, THE ARAB PROPOSAL FOR A PALESTINE STATE WHERE JEWS, MOSLEMS, AND CHRISTIANS LIVE SIDE-BY-SIDE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO SWEDEN, HELEN SAID.

3. REFLECTING DOMESTIC POLITICAL INTEREST IN THE QUESTION, THE PRIME MINISTER WILL TOMORROW IN PARLIAMENT ANSWER INTERPELLATIONS POSED BY MEMBERS OF THE LIBERAL AND MODERATE PARTIES ON HIS MEETING WITH ARAFAT.

4. MODERATE PARTY MP ANDERS WIJMAN, ONE OF THOSE WHO POSED AN INTERPELLATION ON ARAFAT MEETING, TELLS US THAT OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL SUCCEEDED IN DELETING A PASSAGE IN RYDBECK'S SPEECH WHICH ACUSED THE BIG POWERS OF "CYNICALLY" EXPLOITING SITUATION IN MIDEAST BY DELIVERING WEAPONS TO COMBATANTS.

5. GOS OFFICIALS HAVE ASKED ITALIAN, NORWEGIAN AND PERHAPS OTHER DIPLOMATS IN STOCKHOLM ABOUT THE IMPACT IN THEIR CAPITALS OF NEWS OF THE PALME-ARAFAT MEETING, ONLY TO BE TOLD THAT THE EVENT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HARDLY NOTICED AND WAS QUICKLY UPSTAGED BY ARAFAT'S APPEARANCE AT THE UNGA. ITALIAN DCM TELLS US HE HAS REPORTS FROM SWEDISH INDUSTRIALIST IN ALGIERS THAT AMBASSADOR EDELSTAM WAS AT AIRPORT TO GREET ARAFAT, IMPLYING SOME DEGREE OF ADVANCE ASSURANCE THAT AN ARAFAT-PALME MEETING WAS IN THENAARDS.

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6. COMMENT: IF THE PALME GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING A MORE PRONOUNCED SHIFT TOWARDS THE ARABS IN THE MIDEAST LINE, THE STRONG REACTION FROM THE SWEDISH POLITICAL LEADERSHIP (INCLUDING MEMBERS OF PALME'S OWN PARTY) AND PRESS TO SUCH A POSSIBILITY HAS APPARENTLY DETERRED IT, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT CHANGE IN THE SWEDISH APPROACH, AND IN THE FUTURE THE SWEDISH WILL COUPLE THEIR STATEMENTS OF CONCERN FOR THE ISRAELI RIGHT TO EXIST WITH SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FOR

THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS.
JOHNSON

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